

Good afternoon esteemed Chairperson, other committee members, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Rachel Cieplak and I am writing from the University of Connecticut to oppose Bill SB 6618.

In the historic overturning of Roe vs Wade this past summer, the Supreme Court ruled that there is no right to abortion guaranteed within the US Constitution. Whether this statement is one that you agree with or not, I cannot help but think that appropriating Connecticut taxpayer dollars for people outside the state to seek an elective procedure which they are not entitled to is, to put it simply, bad economic policy. The state should instead be putting these millions of dollars towards supporting groups locally which support women before and after the birth of their child.

Coming from a college campus, I have seen firsthand that resources for pregnant students are limited. Currently, at the University of Connecticut, there is no option for housing for mothers who want to continue their education. This is an egregious blow to anyone wanting to achieve academically and be a mother. Additionally, child care is so expensive that even if one could secure housing, finding a safe place for their child during the day can be difficult. I say this as someone who has worked in childcare during my time at UConn.

There is a need in this state for adequate support for mothers, fathers, and their children. Locally to the University, the Women's Center for Eastern Connecticut has been working tirelessly to provide these resources which have been lacking across the state. Providing parenting classes, ultrasounds, baby clothes and formula, Caring Families, the larger organization, is providing for women in a time that is so difficult.

Women, especially young women on college campuses, need support that the state is not currently providing them. I ardently ask that instead of supporting this bill, you would vote to extend money to groups which support the women of Connecticut at all stages of pregnancy and parenthood. Thank you for your time and consideration.